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Gypsy alamo

GYPSIES at Hatch are barricading themselves in to prevent the council evicting them.

They say they will turn Woodside Caravan Park in to the 'gypsy Alamo'.

After losing another planning appeal, residents have fortified the site in a bid to prevent attempts to forcibly remove them.

On Friday they began to secure the site and plan to erect a large marquee and small tents to house the 600-1,000 supporters expected to join them.

They have begun to erect barricades using cars, trucks, planks of wood and banners in a bid to prevent any council contractors getting onto the site.

They plan to block the back entrance with human shields and lorries full of concrete. The other boundaries are already blocked with mounds of earth and ditches, which have been deepened.

Up to 70 civil rights groups, including the Anti-Nazi League and the Jewish Socialist Group are expected.

Park spokesman Clifford Codona said: "We will not be moved.

"We've set up barricades and ditches all around the site and I will not leave here unless I'm dragged handcuffed into a police car and even that won't stop me.

"We've arranged for food parcels to be dropped here by a friend with a helicopter.

"We know weapons are illegal but how about dozens of boxes of tomatoes to throw? The council wants to kick us out of our home - they won't. We will turn this into the gypsy Alamo."

Another resident said: "Look what they've done to us. I wasn't ever ill before I came here - the stress we are under is immense.

"We just want a peaceful life."

This week, Secretary of State John Prescott dismissed appeals against a group of planning applications by residents for permanent caravans on the site.

A judicial review of Mid Bedfordshire District Council's decision to undertake enforcement action against the residents will be heard in the High Court tomorrow. If the council wins, it will be free to remove caravans and other buildings by force.

Mid Bedfordshire District Council declined to comment.

Picture shows gypsy children at Hatch.

